By: Senator(s) DeBar

To: Education

COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE
FOR
SENATE BILL NO. 2487

AN ACT TO PROVIDE CERTAIN INTERVENTION AND IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES FOR LITERACY PROFICIENCY AMONG STUDENTS IN GRADES 4-8; TO DEFINE TERMINOLOGY; TO REQUIRE THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO PROVIDE A SYSTEM OF SUPPORT FOR SCHOOL AND DISTRICT INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERS, CONTENT AREA TEACHERS, LITERACY COACHES, DYSLEXIA THERAPISTS, INTERVENTIONISTS, TUTORS, AND OTHER IDENTIFIED PERSONNEL TO ENSURE THEY HAVE THE KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS TO SUPPORT STUDENTS IN GRADES 4-8 WITH READING DIFFICULTIES; TO PRESCRIBE WHAT THE SYSTEM OF SUPPORTS SHALL ENTAIL; TO REQUIRE THAT ANY STUDENT IN GRADES 4-8 EXHIBITING DEFICIENCIES IN READING SHALL RECEIVE AN INDIVIDUAL READING PLAN (IRP) NO LATER THAN 30 DAYS AFTER THE IDENTIFICATION OF THE READING DEFICIENCY; TO SPECIFY THAT THE IRP SHALL BE CREATED BY THE TEACHER, INTERVENTIONIST, PRINCIPAL, OTHER PERTINENT SCHOOL PERSONNEL, AND PARENT AND SHALL DESCRIBE THE SCIENTIFICALLY RESEARCHED AND EVIDENCED-BASED READING INTERVENTION SERVICES THE STUDENT SHALL RECEIVE TO REMEDY THE READING DEFICIT; TO REQUIRE WRITTEN NOTIFICATION OF THE PARENT OF ANY STUDENT IN GRADES 4-8 WITHIN 10 BUSINESS DAYS OF THE IDENTIFICATION OF A READING DEFICIENCY; TO REQUIRE THAT ANY INCOMING STUDENT IN GRADES 4-8 IDENTIFIED WITH A READING DEFICIENCY BE PROVIDED WITH SUPPLEMENTAL OR INTENSIVE INTERVENTIONS DEPENDENT UPON THE SEVERITY OF THE DEFICIT SKILLS TO ADDRESS THE SPECIFIC DEFICIENCY; TO PROHIBIT THE PROMOTION OF STUDENTS WHOSE READING DEFICIENCY IS NOT REMEDIED BEFORE THE END OF EIGHTH GRADE; TO SET OUT THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF SCHOOL DISTRICTS, THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, AND EDUCATOR PREPARATION PROGRAMS; TO PROVIDE THAT THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION SHALL HAVE THE AUTHORITY TO ENFORCE THIS ACT AND MAY PROMULGATE RULES AND REGULATIONS AS NECESSARY FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS ACT; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI:

SECTION 1. Legislative intent. (1) It is the intent of the Legislature that:

(a) Each student's progression from one grade to another be determined, in part, upon proficiency in reading and writing;

(b) District school board policies facilitate reading instruction and intervention services to address student reading and writing needs; and

(c) Each student and his or her parent or guardian be informed of that student's progress.

(2) The fundamental goal of an education system is to enable each student to develop the skills necessary for success in school and life. The Nation's Report Card reflects no statistically significant improvement in Grade 8 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) Reading scores in thirty (30) years, from 1992 through 2024, with one-third (1/3) of the nation's eighth-grade students reading below the basic level. Therefore, the Legislature finds that it is essential to provide a system of support for students in middle grades who continue to demonstrate difficulty with foundational reading and writing skills.

SECTION 2. Definitions. As used in this act, the following terms shall have the meanings ascribed in this section unless a contrary meaning is clearly evident from the context:

(a) "Accommodations" means measures taken to allow a student to complete the same assignment or test as other students,

but with a change in the timing, formatting, setting, scheduling, response, or presentation. Accommodation is provided for both testing and instruction and changes the way students access information and demonstrate their knowledge, skills, and abilities without lowering learning or performance expectations and without changing academic standards or what is being measured. The purpose is to ensure equal access to the full school experience for students with dyslexia or other learning disabilities. Accommodation does not change the content of instruction, give students an unfair advantage, or change the skills or knowledge that a test measures.

(b) "Comprehensive dyslexia evaluation" is the process of gathering information to identify factors contributing to a student's difficulty learning to read and spell. An evaluation encompasses identification, screening, testing, diagnosis, and all the other information-gathering involved when the student, his or her family, and a team of professionals work together to determine why the student is having difficulty.

(c) "Content-area teacher" includes all subject-area teachers.

(d) "Department" means the State Department of Education.

(e) "Dyslexia" means a specific learning disability that is neurobiological in origin. Dyslexia is characterized by difficulties with accurate and/or fluent word recognition and poor

spelling and decoding abilities. These difficulties typically result from a deficit in the phonological component of language that is often unexpected in relation to other cognitive abilities and the provision of effective classroom instruction. Secondary consequences may include problems in reading comprehension and reduced reading experience that can impede growth of vocabulary and background knowledge.

(f) "Dyslexia diagnosis" means a clear diagnostic statement included in a written evaluation report to document the presence of dyslexia. The evaluation is conducted by a professional psychologist, psychometrist, or speech-language pathologist.

(g) "Dyslexia screening" is a brief assessment measuring critical skills and identifying potential risks and is a predictor of future reading success.

(h) "Educator preparation program" or "EPPs" means any program that prepares individuals for certification as educators, school administrators, or other school personnel.

(i) "Evidence-based" references instructional strategies or practices with clear and convincing proof from scientifically based research studies which have been peer-reviewed.

(j) "High-quality instructional materials" or "HQIMs" means instructional curricula and intervention programs, including, but not limited to, textbooks, teacher guides, and

supplemental materials, that are grounded in the science of reading and evidenced-based research approaches that help all students achieve grade-level learning goals. HQIMs incorporate best practices for building skills essential to reading, follow a sequential order of lessons that are explicit, systematic, and cumulative, contain challenging texts that build student background knowledge, support academic language development and critical thinking skills across core content areas, and are aligned to a state's academic standards. These materials are rigorous, comprehensive, and regularly reviewed and updated to align to research and best practices. They also provide curriculum-specific professional development that prepares teachers to effectively plan and prepare lessons and assessments, differentiate instruction, and monitor student progress.

(k) "Individual reading plan" or "IRP" means an individually designed reading intervention for a student required under Section 5 of this act.

(l) "Multilingual students" include newcomers or students with limited or interrupted education.

(m) "Multi-tiered system of support" or "MTSS" means a framework for supporting and increasing academic, behavioral, and social-emotional outcomes for all students.

(n) "Reading intervention" includes evidence-based strategies from scientifically-based reading research frequently used to improve reading where deficiencies exist and includes, but

is not limited to, individual instruction, multisensory approaches, dyslexia therapy, tutoring, mentoring, or the use of technology that targets specific reading skills and abilities.

(o) "Science of reading" means the large body of evidence that informs how proficient reading and writing develop, why some students have difficulty, and how educators can most effectively assess, teach, and improve student outcomes through prevention of and intervention for reading difficulties.

(p) "Scientifically-based reading research" applies rigorous, systematic, and objective methods to gain knowledge from multiple disciplines to understand how children learn to read, together with strategies and methods that can be used to teach children to read and how they can overcome reading difficulties.

(q) "Structured literacy" is an evidence-based approach to teaching oral and written language aligned to the science of reading. It is based on the science of how kids learn to read and is characterized by direct, explicit, systematic, sequential, cumulative, and diagnostic instruction in phonology, phonemic awareness, sound-symbol association, syllable instruction, morphology, syntax, and semantics.

(r) "System of assessments" means a comprehensive system for use in a school district or charter school that provides screening, diagnostic, and summative assessments of key indicators of reading success, including word recognition, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension.

(s) "Three-cueing system" means a largely antiquated and ineffective style of teaching students to read based on "MSV": meaning, structure and syntax, and visual cues.

(t) "Universal screener" means an assessment that is administered three (3) times per year (beginning, middle, and end) to identify or predict students who may be at risk for reading failure and is typically brief and conducted with all students at a particular grade level.

SECTION 3. System of support for educators. The department shall provide a system of support for school and district instructional leaders, content area teachers, literacy coaches, dyslexia therapists, interventionists, tutors, and other identified personnel across content areas in Grades 4 through 8 to ensure that they have the knowledge and skills to support students with reading difficulties. The system of support shall include:

(a) Professional learning for district instructional leaders, principals, school-level literacy leaders, content-area teachers, special-education teachers, literacy coaches, dyslexia therapists, interventionists, tutors, ELL teachers, and other identified personnel across content areas of students in Grades 4 through 8 on the following:

(i) Comprehensive training grounded in the science of reading to ensure all teachers have the knowledge and skills to support a range of students with diverse needs, students with

reading difficulties, multilingual students, and students with characteristics of or diagnosis of dyslexia, including:

1. Explicit, systematic, developmentally and age-appropriate instruction in phonological awareness, the alphabetic principle, oral language development, decoding, encoding, fluency (including accuracy), morphology (including morphological awareness and etymology), vocabulary, syntax, comprehension, and building content knowledge;

2. Strategies to increase educator knowledge of reading and writing basics for students in Grades 4 through 8;

3. Evidence-based strategies for motivating and engaging adolescent learners;

4. Scientifically researched and evidenced-based reading strategies for accommodations and scaffolding instruction for struggling readers and writers; and

5. Approaches to assist educators in determining causes of reading difficulties, including dyslexia, and other learning differences, for students in Grades 4 through 8 and how word reading, vocabulary, content knowledge, comprehension, and writing are affected; and

(ii) The department-approved assessment system(s) selected by school districts to ensure teachers have the knowledge and skills to administer the assessment and use assessment data to inform instruction based on student needs.

(b) Job-embedded coaching support for teachers of Grades 4 through 8 that shall include the following:

(i) Provide on-site teacher training on evidence-based reading strategies and data-based decision-making;

(ii) Demonstrate lessons;

(iii) Co-teach and/or observe teaching;

(iv) Provide immediate feedback for improvement; and

(v) Provide support to teachers and administrators in data-based decision-making.

(c) Educator preparation programs that equip candidates seeking certification for elementary, special education, and secondary education with training and instruction to:

(i) Effectively teach reading aligned to scientifically researched and evidenced-based reading instruction, including explicit and systematic instruction in phonological awareness, the alphabetic principle, decoding, encoding, fluency, morphology (including etymology), syntax, vocabulary, comprehension, and building content knowledge;

(ii) Implement reading instruction using high-quality instructional materials;

(iii) Provide training on the identification of students not reading on grade level, the selection of appropriate interventions, and effective instruction and interventions for a range of students with diverse needs, including multilingual

students and students with characteristics of dyslexia or diagnosed with dyslexia;

(iv) Understand and use student data to make instructional decisions; and

(v) Incorporate literacy instruction across content areas.

SECTION 4. Reading instruction and intervention. (1) It is the ultimate goal of the Legislature that every student become a skilled reader. State standards for literacy in Grades K through 8 shall align with evidence-based strategies and scientifically based reading research, and all students shall have access to high-quality Tier 1 core instruction that is differentiated to meet students' diverse needs. Evidence-based reading instruction has been proven to accelerate the progress of all students, including those exhibiting a reading deficiency.

(2) The department shall:

(a) Develop a list of HQIM core literacy curricula, interventions, and supplemental materials aligned with scientifically researched and evidence-based reading instruction and state standards for use in districts for students in Grades 4 through 8. Standards as well as HQIM should address word recognition and language comprehension skills, build background knowledge and expand students' knowledge across content areas. Balanced literacy, including, but not limited to, the three-cueing systems model, which research shows is inconsistent with

scientifically based reading instruction and the science of reading, shall not be used to teach reading in Mississippi public schools or state agencies or by anyone who receives state funding. The list shall be approved by the State Board of Education; and

(b) Provide an approved list of one or more reliable and valid reading assessment systems for school district use for screening and monitoring student progress toward becoming a skilled reader. The reading assessment system shall:

(i) Provide a screener to be administered three (3) times per year (beginning, middle, and end) with progress monitoring capabilities and a diagnostic tool to support teachers with targeting instruction based on student needs;

(ii) Measure, at a minimum, fluency and comprehension; and

(iii) For students who demonstrate difficulty with these skills, provide additional diagnostic screening in foundational skills (phonological awareness and phonics) to identify specific skill deficits.

(c) Consider, at a minimum, the following factors in determining which assessment systems to approve for use by school districts:

(i) The time required to conduct the assessment, with the intention of minimizing the impact on instructional time;

(ii) The availability of accommodation for students with specialized plans;

(iii) The timeliness in reporting assessment results to teachers, administrators, and parents; and

(iv) The integration of assessment and instruction the system provides.

(3) School districts shall offer reading intervention services to each student in Grades 4 through 8 who exhibits deficiencies in reading based upon the approved literacy screener administered within the first thirty (30) days of school, middle of the year, and end of the year and subsequently administered diagnostics to inform targeted interventions. Determination for the need for intervention will be made by the examination of multiple data points, including a diagnostic assessment, within the first thirty (30) days of school, Reading intervention shall be provided to struggling students, in addition to core reading instruction that is provided to all students in the general education classroom. School districts shall adhere to the MTSS guidance process for Mississippi and shall consider multiple data points. These services shall:

(a) Provide appropriate interventions to all students in Grades 4 through 8 who are identified with reading deficiencies, as determined by the department, including students who meet the approved assessments system cut scores, Fourth-Grade students promoted from Third Grade with a good-cause exemption, students receiving special education services, students diagnosed

with or showing characteristics of dyslexia, and multilingual learners;

(b) Provide explicit and systematic instruction in age and developmentally appropriate phonological awareness, phonics (including decoding and encoding), fluency, vocabulary, morphology, and comprehension, as applicable;

(c) Utilize explicit and systematic reading strategies to develop phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension, with more extensive opportunities for guided practice, error correction, and feedback;

(d) Monitor the reading progress of each student's reading skills throughout the school year and provide differentiated instruction based on screening, diagnostic, and progress monitoring to adjust instruction to meet students' specific needs;

(e) Be implemented during regular school hours in addition to any offerings provided before, during, or after school with a trained educator;

(f) Be implemented by a reading specialist, dyslexia therapist or interventionist, or school-based coach who shall have training in scientifically researched and evidenced-based reading instruction, fidelity to the selected intervention, and evidence-based literacy instruction practices; and

(g) Be delivered primarily by a trained educator using age and developmentally appropriate interventions, with any technology used to serve as supplemental support.

(4) Local school boards, in collaboration with district literacy leaders, shall develop and implement programs of prevention, intervention, or remediation for students who are educationally at risk, including, but not limited to, those who fail to achieve a passing score on the English - Language Arts State Summative Assessment in Grades 3 through 8, multilingual students, and students who show characteristics of or who are diagnosed with dyslexia in middle grades. Such programs shall include strategies and methods that are proven through scientifically researched and evidence-based instruction. Local school boards shall also implement programs in Grades 4 through 8 to enhance success.

(5) Each school board shall employ at least one (1) reading specialist, interventionist, or dyslexia therapist in any school serving students in Grades 4 through 8. Each such reading specialist shall be required to participate in professional learning grounded in the science of reading, to include:

(a) Training in the identification and use of appropriate interventions, accommodations, and teaching techniques for students with dyslexia or a related reading disorder;

(b) Service as an advisor on dyslexia and related reading disorders; and

(c) State-approved training on the definition of dyslexia and knowledge of:

(i) Techniques to help a student with dyslexia on the continuum of skills;

(ii) Dyslexia characteristics that may manifest at different ages and grade levels;

(iii) The basic foundational keys to reading, including direct, explicit, sequential, systematic, and multisensory/multimodal reading instruction; and

(iv) Appropriate interventions, accommodations, and assistive technology support for students with dyslexia.

SECTION 5. Individual reading plan. (1) Any student in Grades 4 through 8 who exhibits deficiencies in reading at any time, based upon the vetted and approved assessment system, shall receive an individual reading plan (IRP) no later than thirty (30) days after the identification of the reading deficiency. The IRP shall be created by the teacher, interventionist, principal, other pertinent school personnel, and parent(s) and shall describe the scientifically researched and evidenced-based reading intervention services the student shall receive to remedy the reading deficit. If possible, students and parents should have a voice in scheduling decisions, especially when changes affect classes or electives the student values. Each student shall receive intensive reading intervention until the student no longer has a deficiency in reading, as determined by multiple data points,

including an approved literacy screener, diagnostic assessment, and the state's summative assessment.

(2) The IRP shall follow the template provided by the department and include documentation of reading intervention services and strategies outlined within the MTSS guidance document, at a minimum:

(a) The student's specific deficiencies in reading as determined or identified by diagnostic assessment data or the literacy screener provided or approved by the department;

(b) The goals and benchmark cut scores for student growth in reading;

(c) A description of the specific measures that will be used to evaluate and monitor the student's reading progress;

(d) The alignment to an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act for students who receive special education services;

(e) The specific evidence-based literacy instruction the student will receive;

(f) The strategies, resources, and materials that will be provided to the student's parent or guardian to support the student at home in making reading progress;

(g) Any additional services the teacher deems available and appropriate to accelerate the student's reading development; and

(3) The IRP may include the following services for the student:

(i) Instruction from a reading specialist, dyslexia therapist, trained paraprofessional, or classroom teacher with support from an aide; and

(ii) Extended instructional time in the school day or school year or, for students in Grades 6 through 8, a literacy course, in addition to the required core English - Language Arts course, that provides the specific evidence-based literacy instruction identified in the student's reading plan.

SECTION 6. Parent notification. The parent of any student in Grades 4 through 8 who exhibits deficiencies in reading at any time during the school year shall be notified in writing within ten (10) business days after the identification of the reading deficiency, and the written notification shall be made available in the parent's home language, follow the template provided by the department, and include the following:

(a) That his or her child has been identified as having deficiencies in reading, and an IRP will be developed by the teacher(s), interventionist, dyslexia therapist, principal, other pertinent school personnel, and parent(s);

(b) A description of the current services that are provided to the student;

(c) A description of the proposed interventions and supplemental instructional services or dyslexia therapy that are

from scientifically researched and evidenced-based reading instruction, and supports that will be provided to the child that are designed to remedy the identified area(s) of reading deficiency;

(d) Notification that the parents will be informed in writing of their child's progress towards becoming a skilled reader with each progress report; and

(e) Strategies for parents to use at home to help their child succeed in reading.

SECTION 7. Successful progression of incoming students in Grades 4 through 8 identified with a reading deficiency. (1) Any incoming student in Grades 4 through 8 identified with a deficiency in reading shall be provided with supplemental or intensive interventions dependent upon the severity of the deficit skills to address his or her specific deficiency. Intervention services shall include effective instructional strategies to accelerate student progress and shall be delivered by a reading teacher, reading specialist, dyslexia therapist, or interventionist who has received intensive training in remediation of reading difficulties and fidelity to the selected intervention curriculum. The district shall provide the following:

(a) Access to a reading teacher, reading specialist, dyslexia therapist, or interventionist who has received intensive training in remediation of reading difficulties; and

(b) Reading intervention services and supports from a vetted and approved list to address the identified areas of reading deficiency, including, but not limited to:

(i) Use of reading strategies or programs that are verified by scientifically and evidenced-based research and have proven results in accelerating student reading achievement within the same school year;

(ii) Prescribed targeted small-group reading intervention or dyslexia therapy based on student needs, including explicit and systematic instruction with detailed explanations, extensive opportunities for guided practice, and opportunities for error correction and feedback; and

(iii) Scheduled progress monitoring throughout the time in which the student is in intervention to adjust instruction according to student needs.

(2) Summer school remediation programs, or other forms of remediation appropriate to the academic needs of the students, shall not be used to promote a student who failed the grade level prior to summer school. Summer school remediation may be offered to students based on the results of the universal screener, diagnostic assessment, intervention progress monitoring data, or ELA State Summative Assessment.

(3) A read-at-home plan shall be provided in the family's home language by the district and shall include strategies for parents to use at home to help their child succeed in reading.

SECTION 8. **Eighth-grade reading gate.** A public school student may not be assigned a grade level based solely on the student's age or any other factors that constitute social promotion.

Beginning in the 2027-2028 school year, if a student's reading deficiency is not remedied by the end of the student's eighth-grade year, as demonstrated by the student scoring at the lowest achievement level in reading on the state annual accountability assessment or on an approved alternative standardized assessment for eighth grade, the student shall not be promoted to ninth grade.

SECTION 9. **Good cause for promotion.** (1) An eighth-grade student who does not meet the academic requirements for promotion to the ninth grade may be promoted by the school district only for good cause. Good-cause exemptions for promotion are limited to the following students:

(a) Limited English proficient students who have had less than two (2) years of instruction in an English Language Learner program;

(b) Students with disabilities whose individual education plan (IEP) indicates that participation in the statewide accountability assessment program is not appropriate, as authorized under state law;

(c) Students with a disability who participate in the state annual accountability assessment and who have an IEP or a

Section 504 plan that reflects that the individual student has received intensive remediation in reading for more than two (2) years but still demonstrates a deficiency in reading and previously was retained in a prior grade;

(d) Students who demonstrate an acceptable level of reading proficiency on an alternative standardized assessment approved by the State Board of Education; and

(e) Students who have received intensive intervention in reading for two (2) or more years but still demonstrate a deficiency in reading and who previously were retained in a prior grade for a total of two (2) years and have not met exceptional education criteria. A student who is promoted to ninth grade with a good-cause exemption shall be provided intensive reading instruction and intervention informed by specialized diagnostic information and delivered through specific reading strategies to meet the needs of each student so promoted. The school district shall assist schools and teachers in implementing reading strategies that research has shown to be successful in improving reading among students with persistent reading difficulties.

(2) A request for good-cause exemptions for an eighth-grade student from the academic requirements established for promotion to ninth grade must be made consistent with the following:

(a) Documentation must be submitted from the student's teacher to the school principal which indicates that the promotion of the student is appropriate and is based upon the student's

record. The documentation must consist of the good-cause exemption being requested and must clearly prove that the student is covered by one (1) of the good-cause exemptions listed in subsection (1) of this section.

(b) The principal shall review and discuss the recommendations with the teacher and parents and make a determination as to whether or not the student should be promoted based on requirements set forth in this act. If the principal determines that the student should be promoted, based on the documentation provided, the principal must make the recommendation in writing to the school district superintendent, who, in writing, may accept or reject the principal's recommendation. The parents of any student promoted may choose that the student be retained for one (1) year, even if the principal and district superintendent determines otherwise.

SECTION 10. District responsibilities. (1) The school district shall conduct an annual review of IRPs during the first twenty (20) days of school for students who had a plan from the last school year. The review shall assess the effectiveness of prior interventions and any additional support and services needed to address the identified areas of reading deficiency. This may include supplemental, scientifically researched, and evidence-based reading interventions provided before and/or after school by a teacher or tutor with specialized reading training.

Current screener and diagnostic data shall be used to determine continued reading intervention support.

(2) Each district school board shall annually report in writing to the department and on their website by October 1 of each year, the following information on the prior school year:

(b) By grade, the number and percentage of all students in Grades 4 through 8 performing below grade level on local or statewide assessments.

(c) By grade, the number and percentage of students in Grades 4 through 8 who received supplemental or intensive reading intervention the previous year.

(d) By grade, the number and percentage of students who had an IRP no longer qualify for them.

(e) By grade, the number and percentage of students retained in Kindergarten through Grade 8.

(f) By grade, the number and percentage of students retained in Grades 4 through 8 who have an IRP.

SECTION 11. Department responsibilities. The department shall provide, to each school district no later than ninety (90) days before the annual due date, a uniform format for districts to report the required information. The department shall provide guidance and technical assistance to aid school districts in implementing this act.

SECTION 12. Educator preparation program responsibilities. All candidates graduating from educator preparation programs

(EPPs) in Mississippi in the areas of social studies, science, and English - Language Arts Education for Grades 4 through 8 shall be required to successfully complete AIM Pathways to Proficient Reading training, or an equivalent reading training program approved by the department before certification.

SECTION 13. State Board of Education authority. The State Board of Education shall have the authority to enforce this act and may promulgate rules and regulations as necessary for the implementation of this act.

SECTION 14. Funding. The Legislature shall provide sufficient funding for the implementation of this act.

SECTION 15. This act shall take effect and be in force from and after July 1, 2026.